

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONGRESSMAN CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION POLICY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND THE CENSUS

CONGRESSMAN ADAM PUTNAM, CHAIRMAN

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Public Safety Interoperability: Can You Hear Me Now? **(Federal Perspectives)**

Government Reform Subcommittees to Hold Joint Hearing

What: Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations **and** Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census joint oversight hearing on Public Safety Interoperability

When: Thursday, November 6, 2003, 11:30 a.m.

Where: Room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building

Background:

Government Reform Subcommittee Chairmen Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Adam Putnam (R-FL) will convene a joint oversight hearing to examine barriers to communications interoperability between first responders -- and federal programs and policies to overcome those barriers.

Interoperability is the ability of public safety providers – law enforcement, firefighters, EMS, emergency management, public utilities, transportation and other personnel – to exchange voice and data communications on demand, in real time. It is the term that describes how radio communications systems should operate between and among agencies and jurisdictions that respond to common emergencies. Differing incident response protocols, planning priorities, funding priorities and funding cycles can make acquiring and deploying interoperable systems difficult. Furthermore, limited availability of radio frequency spectrum for law enforcement and emergency response can also impede interoperability.

This hearing will examine the challenges of communications interoperability for first responders, and look at the federal government's programs and policies aimed at meeting those challenges. The Subcommittees will focus on the Department of Homeland Security's Wireless Public Safety Interoperable Communications Program; the e-government initiatives known as "SAFECOM"; and the Federal Communications Commission's role in regulating state and local first responder spectrum allocation and licensing.

Witnesses:

Panel One

Mr. William O. Jenkins, Jr.

Director
Homeland Security and Justice Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office

Mrs. Marilyn Ward

Chairman, National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC)
Manager, Public Safety Communications Division, Orange County, Florida

Mrs. Aldona Valicenti

National Association of State Chief Information Officers
NASCIO Member to PSWN/SAFECOM
Chief Information Officer, State of Kentucky

Mrs. Marilyn Praisner

Councilwoman, Montgomery County, MD
Chair, Telecommunity
Chair, Technology Committee, National Association of Counties
PSWN Executive Board, CAPWIN Executive Board

Mr. George Ake

Program Director
Capital Wireless Integrated Network(CAPWIN)

Mr. Vincent Stile

President
Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, International(APCO)

Panel Two

Ms. Karen S. Evans

E-Gov/IT Director
U.S. Office of Management and Budget

Dr. David Boyd

Program Manager
SAFECOM, Wireless Public Safety Interoperable Communications Program
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Mr. John Morgan

Assistant Director for Science and Technology
National Institute of Justice
AGILE, Advanced Generation Interoperability Law Enforcement

Mr. John Muleta

Chief

Wireless Bureau

Federal Communications Commission

Mr. Edmond Thomas

Chief

Office of Engineering and Technology

Federal Communications Commission

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